World Chronicle

UNITED NATIONS

PROGRAMME: No. 722 recorded 16 October 1998

GUEST: **Michael Doyle**
Director
Center of International Studies
Princeton University

JOURNALISTS: Laura Silber, Financial Times
James Wurst, In These Times

MODERATOR: Michael Littlejohns

FIFTY YEARS OF UN PEACEKEEPING

The year 1998 marks half a century of United Nations Peacekeeping, which was pioneered and developed by the UN as one of the means for maintaining international peace and security. Forty-nine peacekeeping missions later, what has been its achievement and failures? Michael Doyle of Princeton University discusses these vital but often controversial operations.

WORLD CHRONICLE is produced by the Media Division, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.

Duration: 28:01"
Executive Producer: Chaim Litewski
Director: Livingston Hinckley
Production Assistant: Corazon A. Icasas

ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues.

Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently described the creation of UN Peacekeeping in these terms: "It was an attempt to confront and defeat the worst in man with the best in man; to counter violence with tolerance, might with moderation, and war with peace". This year marks half a century of United Nations Peace-Keeping. From its origins in the Middle East in 1948, fifty years later, peacekeeping has embraced forty-nine often controversial operations on all continents. So how does the Blue Helmet's balance sheet add up?

Our guest today is Michael Doyle, Director of the Center of International Studies and Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. Mr. Doyle has written extensively on the subject of UN Peace-keeping.

Joining me to talk with Mr. Doyle is Laura Silber of the *Financial Times* and James Wurst of *In These Times*.

Mr. Doyle, welcome to **World Chronicle**.

Professor Doyle, peace-keeping operations have been scaled down considerably – fewer than 15,000 troops, I think, in the field at this time in seventeen different operations from many more at the peak. The peace-keeping account is awash in red ink thanks to the failure of a number of countries, mainly the United States, to pay their dues. Would you say that the balmy days of peace-keeping are over for the UN?

DOYLE: Unfortunately, I think that is largely correct Michael, that the days of great enthusiasm between 1990 and 1993, 1994, I think, are over. And it is a product of discovering how immensely difficult it is to assist a country in emerging from a civil war with all the trauma that's involved in that and it's also a product, I think, of a disappointing lack of support from the international community. There was a high water period when countries felt that by joining together their separate efforts would add up to something that would promote the interest of all. And there has been some question of that recently so I

think that is correct. There is, I think, if I could just take one more moment on that, some ray of hope. I think there may be developing a realistic and useful division of labour whereby some regional organizations in Africa, NATO itself, are taking on some tasks for which they are well suited. My hope is that on the other side of that division of labour, the countries of the world today understand the vital role that the United Nations can play, especially on the civilian end of the overall peace-keeping effort.

LITTLEJOHNS: But when these regional organizations get into the act, there seems to be a tendency to want approval from the Security Council. Do you feel that this is really necessary?

DOYLE: Definitely. From an international legal point of view, I think it is necessary. The United Nations Security Council is, as I read the law, the only organization that can endorse anything other than an act of pure, collective or individual self-defence. And so for anything having to do with an intervention for humanitarian purposes the UN Security Council approval, as I read it, is necessary whether in Kosovo or elsewhere. So I think there is a crucial legitimating role there from the legal point of view. From the political and moral point of view there is an equivocally important role to play. The Security Council, even though it is a narrow and small body, does represent the world's major powers from different regions of the world, different cultures of the world. In addition to the permanent five there are of course as well the small countries who have been elected to represent the members of the General Assembly. This is the place where international legitimacy resides if it resides anywhere.

SILBER: But in your work Professor Doyle, you mentioned perhaps the gap between what the Security Council, the mandates issued by the Security Council, and then of course what was actually carried out on the ground, i.e. whether it was contributing to troops, whether the mandate was actually enforceable. So if we turn towards increasingly regional organizations, do you expect that gap to be increasingly wider? How will that be overcome?

DOYLE: I think there is a very significant danger, that is that the gap between what the Security Council decrees in its wisdom and what actually happens on the ground

has been a very serious one in practice. But you Laura know better than I do about what happened in Bosnia with regard to the Safe Areas resolution and others where promises of deterring protection were made and then not fulfilled because the troops were not sent out there to implement them. And that's a very serious problem in the Security Council. When we bring in regional organizations there is a worry that mandates will be written lightly by the Security Council or efforts of oversight and verification will not be adequate because it is being done by the regional organizations and they might be cut slack in order to do whatever they want and that's a real danger. The only plus side I'd say to that is that the regional organizations themselves, because they and their immediate neighbours will be engaged in this activity will have an incentive to try to pursue as rational and careful a policy as possible.

SILBER: What about when they become actual combatants in the case, say let's look at Sierra Leone or something like that, when you have a regional force, ECOWAS, actually becoming part of the conflict?

DOYLE: That's the major down side to regional action. Because of the fact that it is by neighbours they are more likely to have a stake in the conflict. If we were called back to Cambodia, there were countries from all over the world in the UN operation in Cambodia. There was a very good battalion for example from Uruguay which is an awful long way away from Cambodia. They had no stake in who won or who lost in the Cambodian strives, they were there to do their internationalist duty. When you look at a situation such as the one you just described there are great powers in that region that have special stakes that are involved, and as a result, the cost of having a regional solution is that countries that have a stake get involved. The plus, and I hate to be so even-handed but there is a plus to this, is that the regional states care and so sometimes when you cannot mobilize the support in the Security Council you can get a regional organization to do something at last. And so for all the criticisms some outsiders have had of the operations in Liberia or elsewhere, at least they were there when the rest of the states of the world weren't going to go.

WURST: There's other trends that are shifting there, showing in peace-keeping

as you are talking about regional operations, etc. Another one is the idea that civilian police are replacing troops in some cases like Haiti or Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia, the soldiers have been replaced by troops. In other cases it's only soldiers that have been replaced by police and in some cases it's only police. Do you see this as a positive development, and if so, how could that be encouraged or further advanced?

DOYLE: Jim, I certainly do. I think it is extremely important, with your once typical peacekeeping operation, we have to admit that every one is different, but if we had to draw any generalizations among them, by and large, there is a successful truce with which they begin. And then if there is an international force sent out it quickly can achieve something like a separation, maybe in some cases, a demobilization of large weapons, even if the small weapons have never arrived at, and the problems that arise come at a middle level of violence. That is, they come as not just like ordinary street crimes – it's gangs, it's paramilitaries, it's demobilized soldiers who then go into private enterprise of crime. And this level of violence is one that is often been a gap in between the battalions on the one hand, which are good at deterring large scale violence, and the local police force, which is often very weak but can deal with neighbourhood issues. But when you get to the world of the paramilitaries and demobilized soldiers who join up for plunder, that's a big gap. And having an international force come in that can address that gap – I have in mind in particular the sending of the Carabinieri to Bosnia just a couple of weeks ago – I think that is a very positive step in dealing with the arrival of a real policing presence which will then allow the local police to become more effective, because they can't deal with the great, big gangs. So it seems to be one of the more positive recent developments.

WURST: Is there any situation where you think that this might be applicable now?

DOYLE: Well, I'm hoping that the Carabinieri would be enforced and that they'll do as well as people are hoping that they will do in Bosnia because that was a key gap in Bosnia. And IFOR, or SFOR more recently, to its credit, has been moving down its level of operations. They seized some communications towers that were very important

and they have gotten involved in some urban disputes. But by and large, superb soldiers that they are, that's not what they're trained for. That's not they're experience. It's the kind of forces that the Carabinieri represent. And I think, one of the more hopeful things that has happened recently.

SILBER: What do you think that they could do, that say SFOR hasn't been able to do in Bosnia in particular?

DOYLE: I think some of the possibilities are they might take on the task of hunting down some of the alleged and indicted war criminals which is something that SFOR has been very reluctant to do for a variety of reasons. They might take on the task of escorting some refugee returns which is something that SFOR has done but with a certain amount of reluctance. You know the value of a policeman is a product, or sort of the culture in the organization of police. They are used to dealing with civilians, they are used to dealing with confusion, taking a lot of initiative. Their first instinct is to ask questions rather than respond or escalate force.

LITTLEJOHNS: Some people might disagree with that, the evidence of what happens in New York sometimes.

DOYLE: Yes, there are exceptions to all of these generalizations, that would certainly be one as well Michael. But that's their training, that's their culture. And when they do their job well I think that's what they try to do. And so that is a useful sort of, heretofore, by and large, absent presence in peacekeeping. We have plenty of CIVPOL out there in advisory capacities but this is a relatively new measure and I think quite a good one.

SILBER: But what do you think about the fact that some people say well, they only understand, in Bosnia there was so much violence that if someone is backed up by an armoured personnel carrier, okay well I will listen to him. But if he doesn't even have a gun, I might not take him seriously.

DOYLE: Exactly, and that's been, as I understand it, part of the problem with the ITPF, that is the International Temporary Police Force that the UN has been sponsoring in Bosnia. They are unarmed. They are there as advisors. They are there as often senior

policemen to provide some role models and technical advice for the local police that they will be training. They haven't been able to fill this gap when a certain degree of force, or at least the ability to exercise force is necessary, which is what the Carabinieri can do and which is a level of force much less than is appropriate to bring in tanks and armoured personnel carriers that the SFOR battalions have. Now it is very important that SFOR not go home no matter how many Carabinieri are sent there. The ability to have a rapid reaction at least, force brigade or whatever would be the appropriate size as backup for a long time to come is extremely useful. No one should think that they can escalate and dominate the Carabinieri by raising the stakes with heavier weapons. That the ability of SFOR to come in to back them up I think would be absolutely essential.

WURST: Same region of the world, different issue - preventive deployment - Macedonia is the only case currently where the UN has a preventive force on the ground and by all accounts it is doing well. Can that model be replicated elsewhere, do you believe?

DOYLE: I think it both has been doing very well as you suggested but it is hard to replicate elsewhere. There are some situations where you will not get the crucial components of a preventive force which is consent. And in this case, the Macedonian government welcomed the deployment of the preventive force there because it helped create a potential trip wire should there be efforts to breach the Macedonian border that would signal wider international involvement. And that works to deter others who might want to have those kinds of incursions and that was definitely a matter of their own choice and it's been very successful. But there are parts of the world where the exact problem is that one or more of the factions fighting inside, in a civil war, don't want to have that kind of deployment.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is **World Chronicle,** our guest is Michael Doyle, Director of the Centre of International Studies and Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University.

Professor Doyle, let's go away from the Balkans for a minute. The UN took a lot of flack for what was perceived as a huge foul up in Rwanda. Tens of thousands of people

lost their lives in part because, at least the UN was blamed for not doing what it could have done when there were early warnings of genocidal impulses, shall we say. What can you tell us about Rwanda from your knowledge of the situation?

DOYLE: I could tell you something about it, Michael. I can't claim to be a Rwanda expert but I read it with great interest because of the horrible tragedy that occurred there. The loss of those lives is one of the more extreme and striking cases of genocide following World War II. When we look at it with the advantages of hind sight, we can think about things that were clearly wrong and should have been stopped and prevented. Rwanda had been an area that had been fought over by the great powers for influence and some of the great powers may have even have been involved in assisting some of the factions that were leading the genocide. So in an ideal world the greater respect for national sovereignty, self-determination, a broader set of principles and values, but that's an awful lot of wishful thinking. When it came down to the crisis itself and the word began to come out about the nature of what was occurring there, the international community was not well served by some of the reports that came out which gave us confusing stories about what was happening. Some were alleging that this was just absolutely normal violence when in fact, in retrospect, we know this was a concerted plan of massacre that went into place. But when that happened, when the word became clearer – again we are talking about a month or so after many deaths into this operation, into the plans of the slaughter – the international community really failed on its most basic commitments. The lesson that we drew from World War II, we being the international community, was that genocide would be prevented, stopped and punished, and that was the lesson of having stood by and watched the Holocaust. Now, we, the international community, didn't live up to those commitments in Rwanda and it should have.

LITTLEJOHNS: So by the international community you mean the United Nations as the symbol of the international community?

DOYLE: Yes, and by the United Nations we always mean its members and its most powerful members most directly. Some States I've been told and I could be corrected because I'm not certain about the record, but I'm told that four African States volunteered

to send battalions to Rwanda on the immediate news of the outbreak of violence. And the great powers, here we have in mind the U.S. and other NATO members that had the capability to take those forces to Rwanda were unwilling to do so and I think that was a real failure.

SILBER: Just to get back to the Balkans for one second, when you talk about the failures of the International Community, of the United Nations, what lessons would you draw from Bosnia in that Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda? Those are, I think, what we look at when we say these are the big failures in that what may have caused the descent of peacekeeping and its reputation. What would you say, say in Bosnia for example, what was the biggest failure? Was it the gap between the Security Council and what was carried out or what else?

DOYLE: I think it's an extremely complicated case and fortunately much of what I've learned, I learned from you and your book so I'm not just going to say the same thing back to you. But my sense of it as I look at what happened there was that there was a sense of -- the positive thing that we can say about this serious failure by the great powers is that there was a sense of confusion. They didn't fully understand what the nature of the collapse of the former Yugoslavia was, and in that respect, they didn't understand how deep some of the tensions were, more importantly, they didn't understand the ruthlessness of some of the leaders in the region and how prepared they were to see slaughter in order to further their own aims. I would say that this was somewhat of a surprise. The second thing is that we were institutionally flat on our feet. We didn't quite know who was responsible. For very good reasons, the Europeans wanted to initially treat this as a European issue and many Americans wanted to see it that way as well, very conveniently, given an unwillingness to get involved in this. And that slowed down a concerted response until in the end there was a great deal of mutual finger pointing between the various European capitals and Washington that made any concerted response difficult and that turned into blame. And so that degree of misunderstanding had to be overcome over a period of time before eventually there would be a response. Unfortunately, it took a horribly long period of time and in that period of time, tens of thousands of innocent

people were slaughtered. The question I have is, given the slaughter and the eventual decision when the Europeans decided to reinforce UNPROFOR with the Rapid Reaction Force, which was a very important decision, and then the Americans began to get committed on the view that something had to be done because NATO was falling apart as an institution, and that was very important to us, and when the Croatians had become better armed from a variety of different means and were determined to take initiative, that took an awful lot of learning time with a great deal of slaughter. My big question is have we learned that lesson well enough to deal with something like Kosovo where some similar patterns appear to be emerging?

WURST: Now, I'd like to switch back to Africa particularly on arms-related issues. The Security Council in September passed a new resolution on strengthening arms embargoes particularly in the African context. There was an issue in Secretary-General Annan's report on the causes of conflict in Africa. The only on the grounds investigation of violations of arms embargo is against the former Government of Rwanda. That team in its first series of reports gave a lengthy list of problems that were not simply addressed. Basically no enforcement, no follow-up once the Security Council did something. So with all of that in the background, all of those facts on the ground, what could be done to strengthen the enforcement or the use of arms embargo? Is it an under utilized tool, so how could that be helped?

DOYLE: I think that one has to begin before an embargo is imposed to make sure if it were to work well, that it has the kind of effects that one wants to see. I think that it is very important not to prevent a faction or a side that has legitimate right to defend itself from doing so. One has to begin I think with an assessment of what the impact would be if it were well-enforced. If it is the view then that the impact is such that it's not going to unfairly disadvantage a side that has a right to defend itself, and I have in mind here partly the Bosnian example from former Yugoslavia. If that's the view, then the most important second issue is that it be enforced very well, and it doesn't leak and that one has monitors that are on the ground and that there are external means to make sure that any attempt to break it happens to be either blocked or punished. That's the third issue, excuse

me, the second issue. And the third issue is to make sure that the burdens of an embargo as imposed are borne fairly and so that neighbouring countries don't wind up suffering for what is a collective international decision, on the basis of international interests, that nonetheless bears most unfairly and directly on an immediate neighbouring country on an embargo that takes place, that disrupts their transportation or in other ways affects them. So generally, in that regard, arms embargoes are better than larger scale embargoes that might include food and other forms of merchandise.

LITTLEJOHNS: Professor Doyle, the UN has mounted a number of operations in Central America which seemed to have performed pretty well. The results have been fairly successful, in fact very successful in some cases. Why was Central America an easier situation to deal with than some of the things that we have been talking about?

DOYLE: I think that the most important factor is that the factions that had been fighting in El Salvador for example, after having inflicted immense damage on each other for 10, 12 years – again thousands of casualties armed and non-combatant – came to the view that peace was the only way that they could serve their interest. That war was just something that was hurting them. They came to two views. Number one, they couldn't win after a period of struggle and number two, the stalemate that they were in was hurting both sides and peace was therefore the rational solution to that. It doesn't mean that it was easy. It took a lot of very, very talented mediation by the UN and by others. It took very talented peacekeeping to assist this process and facilitate it. But the basic important difference there I think, for both El Salvador and Guatemala, is that the two factions came to the view that peace was preferable to continued war.

LITTLEJOHNS: Was the fact that it was next door to the United States a factor? Did the United States get more actively involved in these situations than it did perhaps in some other regions?

DOYLE: The United States was actively involved and that was part of the problem. In the 1980's where we were supporting the Government in, especially the El Salvador case....

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm talking about when the UN got involved with peace-

keeping...

DOYLE: Yes.. But once the United States had changed its policy just as you described Michael, it was an important assist in both cases. The Secretary-General had four friends to help assist in the Salvadoran peace negotiations. They were Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico and Spain. But there was always a fifth friend that helped make the process work. The U.S., I should say, could not have done it on its own. It was very important to have those other states there to provide assurances, especially for the FMLN in El Salvador, that their interest would be listened to. But at the same time they couldn't have done it without the United States, the United States sent a very clear signal to the military in El Salvador that it was time for peace and then in various ways provided very good assistance in the retraining of the police forces, for example, and in other ways to help the peace process move ahead.

SILBER: When we look now, I mean at the future of peacekeeping if we could, where do you see it going besides the regional? How can we get over the problems within the Security Council in terms of actually ever agreeing to mount a peacekeeping operation or even in working with a regional organization?

DOYLE: It's a very serious problem, I mean there will not be peace operations unless the Security Council endorses them. That is, there won't be UN-based ones or ones that the United Nations participates in. And that depends upon the quality of the relations among the key states there and especially the permanent members and so the very political task of maintaining a minimal consensus on the value of world order, a campaign that was launched so eloquently by Gorbachev in his 1987 speech on universal human values, that's the beginning of this as I see it, carried forward with very impressively in the early 1990's, that has to occur and that's essential for the United Nations to do anything that is constructive. Beyond that, I think we have learned some things about, what...the issue we began with - the division of labour, that is there are some things regional organizations, especially NATO and some others can do better and one should...or individual national governments can do better, including especially the use of force. And there are some things the United Nations can do better and that has to do with the management,

especially of the civilian part of the operation. And a good transition between those two I think is one thing we have learned as very important for peace operations.

LITTLEJOHNS: The UN also needs the money to be able to do it.

DOYLE: Of course these are expensive.

LITTLEJOHNS: The United States is still balking at the idea of forking over the money. Do you see any way out of that?

DOYLE: As I read again the newspaper accounts, there are leaders in Washington in both political parties that are committed to a responsible participation in the United Nations. The U.S. institutions have been around for a couple centuries, not always efficiently, and it's not very efficient these days.

LITTLEJOHNS: Professor Doyle, that's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of **World Chronicle.** Our guest has been Michael Doyle, Director of the Centre of International Studies and Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. He was interviewed by Laura Silber of the *Financial Times,* and James Wurst of *In These Times.* I'm Michael Littlejohns, thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **World Chronicle.**